# Technology Planning for USF E-rate

Sonya Schryer Norris

Technology Plan Advisor

Library of Michigan

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Always plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.  -- Richard C. Cushing

# Why Plan?

- So that technology decisions align with the overall library plan
- To think about how you are integrating technology into the libraries' operations
- To manage and coordinate the multitude of technology applications throughout the library
- To provide effective services to your patrons

# The Why's Continued

- So that everyone has a common understanding of the role of technology in the library and
- To justify budget requests

# But Most Importantly

*Technology planning will help you!*

Creating a technology plan provides a time and place for you to think about your technology goals to help avoid IT crisis saving you time, expense and trouble

# Who Should Be on the Team?

◆ Evaluate interest and expertise on staff
- Public Services
- Technical Services
- Technology Staff

◆ Include a board member

◆ Consider including community members

# Gathering Momentum

A good technology plan follows closely on the heels of your organization's vision statement.

The goals of your technology plan should support the goals of your vision statement.

# Your Vision

A **vision** is the desired future state for the organization.

- Realistic
- Credible
- Attractive
- Future-Oriented

# Vision cont.

- ◆ inspires enthusiasm & encourages commitment
- ◆ well articulated & easily understood
- ◆ reflects the uniqueness of the organization
- ◆ ambitious

▪ Gail Powers-Schaub

# Strong Example:
# Alcona County Library

The mission of Alcona County Library is to strive to be the center of the community's intellectual, educational, and cultural life, providing opportunities for independent studies, life long learning and cultural enrichment, as well as information needed by citizens in their daily lives.

# Tie Your Vision to Your Plan

"Strive to be the center of the community's intellectual, educational and cultural life"

could tie into purchasing additional public access computers for adult or children's use; replacing older PACs; installing wifi; and staff development, among many other objectives.

# Michael Stephens

Technology is not an end in itself but a tool to help us meet our libraries' service goals

# SWOT Analysis and How It Relates to Library Service

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| Opportunities | Threats |

# A Successful Technology Plan Is

- Concrete
- Realistic
- Attainable
- Internally consistent and
- Accurately represents the
  - Intentions
  - Skills and
  - Resources at your library

# Success cont.

- ◆ Is aligned with the vision statement and goals of your library as a whole

- ◆ Has the buy-in of staff and the board

- ◆ Specifically addresses each of the five required E-rate elements

# Yogi Berra

You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there.

# A Three Year Plan

◆ Technology plans may span up to 3 years but no longer.

◆ E-rate years begin July 1 and end June 30

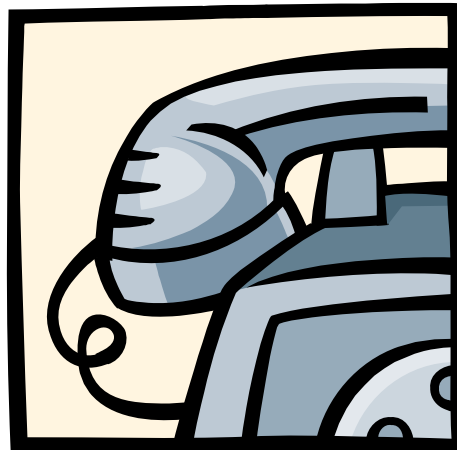**A plan applied for today would span July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2010**

# When to Write Your Plan

- A technology plan for the E-rate program must be created before you file your 470 in the fall.
- It must be approved by the time services are received in July.

# Who Needs a Tech Plan?

Everyone applying for anything other than POTS, or Plain Old Telephone Service

# E-rate requires five elements that are weighted equally in terms of plan approval

1. Goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve library services

2. A professional development strategy to ensure that staff knows how to use the new technologies to improve education or library services.

3. An assessment of telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services needed

# E-rate cont.

4. The plan must provide for a sufficient budget to acquire and maintain the hardware, software, professional development, and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy for improved education or library services.

5. The plan must include an evaluation process that enables the school or library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise.

# USF Element 1: Goals and Strategy

- ◆ Goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve library services

# Goals are Made Up of SMART Objectives

- **S**pecific. Objectives should generate specific actions and be detailed enough to be understandable and give clear directions to others.

- **M**easurable. A method for measuring an objective must be in place before work can begin. As such, a measure will determine when the objective has been accomplished.

# SMART Objectives cont.

- **A**ggressive but **A**ttainable. Objectives should be consistent with available resources but still cause library staff members to stretch to meet them.

- **R**esults-oriented. Rather than being general or vague, objectives should specify a result – an output or an outcome.

# SMART Objectives cont.

◆ **T**ime-bound. A specific deadline should be stated for achieving the objective. Generally the shorter the time frame for action, the better.

# Goals and Service Needs

Be clear about the relationship of your **goals and objectives** to your **service needs**

# Strong Example:
# St. Clair County Library

- Goals and strategies broken down into sections:
    - Collections
    - Outreach
    - Services
    - Training (staff)
    - Training (public)
    - Web site
- Each section has specific goals; each goal has specific activities and items to support it

# St. Clair County Library Goals

- Services – Goal 3: Investigate wireless Internet access for public use. Activities:
  - Evaluate the inventory project using wireless technology
  - Have IT evaluate each building for "dead zones"
  - Design wireless area for each of the branches
  - Evaluate space for patrons
  - Investigate security issues
  - Write policy and procedure

# What to Avoid

◆ Goals you have already met such as equipment that was purchased before the time span of the technology plan

◆ Strategies or technology goals that are not aligned with your library's mission statement (for instance, your mission statement is clear that children's and adult services are equally important to the library but no provisions are made for technology in the children's area)

# What to Avoid  cont.

- Goals that are not specific (i.e. do not specifically tie technology goals to library service)

# It's OK to Include…

- Services that are on-going such as "continuing to provide public access to the Internet"

- Goals for staff such as "raise the comfort level of staff with new forms of technology"

# USF Element 2: Professional Development

◆ A professional development strategy to ensure that staff knows how to use the new technologies to improve education or library services.

# Strong Example from the Kent District Library

- ◆ Goal: Fulfill public service objectives through effective staff training and development
  - Objective: Develop a plan for staff technology training to enhance the use of technology by staff in their daily work roles
  - Objective: Provide staff professional resources in electronic formats whenever feasible
  - Objective: Raise the staff's level of comfort with technology by developing tutorials for online functions using presentation software
  - Objective: Improve internal and external customer support

# It's OK to Include…

- Training that you do on-site such as training provided during staff in-service days
- Training provided by your ILS
- Online classes
- Classes that staff take at other libraries
- Classes provided by the co-op
- Conference attendance where material is appropriate such as MLA
- Classes or seminars that staff can receive CEUs for, such as MeL training
- The library's training procedures for new staff

# What to Avoid

- Staff development goals that can't be tied to improving library service

# USF Element 3: Needs Assessment

◆ An assessment of telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services needed

# First: What Do You Have?

- Conduct a technology inventory of hardware and software
- Free tools available from TechAtlas (for working online) and TechSoup (for Word documents you can print and fill in)

# Example from Crawford County Library

| Accessible | OS | Internet | Total Units |
|---|---|---|---|
| Patron Access Workstation | Windows XP | Yes | 24 |
| Patron Access Catalog | Windows XP | Yes | 26 |
| Patron Access Laptop | Windows XP | Yes | 11 |
| Staff Access Workstation | Windows XP | Yes | 10 |
| Children's Workstation | Windows XP | No | 5 |

# Second: What Do You Need?

◆ Evaluate hardware, software and other technology services you will need to improve library services

# Example from Crawford County Library

◆ Technology needed broken down in to:

- Software
- Hardware
- Telecommunications
- Replacement Plan

# Hardware examples from Crawford County Library

- Upgrade scanners to accommodate a variety of forms

- Purchase barcode readers to replace obsolete units as well as mobile unit for inventory

- Purchase hardware equipment to digitize historical documents and to make them available for public use

- Purchase wireless hubs to make client computers more easily accessed at all branches as technology and accessibility permit.

# What to Avoid

- Including purchase of items not included in your budget
- Including items that are not included in your goals and objectives
- Including items that do not tie into providing patron service (such as a microwave for the staff area)

**Goals – Needs Assessment – Budget should line up**

# USF Element 4: Budget

◆ The plan must provide for a sufficient budget to acquire and maintain the hardware, software, professional development, and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy for improved education or library services.
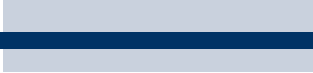
# Guidelines to Keep in Mind

- Build in 10% of your budget for contingencies
- Establish a 3-5 year replacement plan for staff computers and for public access computers.

# Budget Line Items for Next 3 Years

- Hardware

- Software

- Telecommunications

- Contract Services for IT staff

- Staff Training

- Other (Please describe)

# What to Avoid

◆ Establishing the goal of purchasing services or equipment (such as hardware or software) without a line item in your budget to pay for it.

◆ Establishing the goal of providing a technology service (such as wireless or a T3 line) without a line item in your budget to pay for it.

◆ Not establishing a line item for professional development unless free options alone have been declared in the plan.

# USF Element 5: Evaluation Process

- The plan must include an evaluation process that enables the school or library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise.

# Target Goals and Timeline for Accomplishing Your Goals

- ◆ Benchmarks toward your goals must be measurable
  - ■ By this date something will have happened
    - **Example**: Replace all public access computers more than four years old by December 31, 2007 (Goal 1A).
    - **Example**: Redesign Web site so that it meets accessibility standards by August 31, 2007 (Goal 6B).
- ◆ Regular Review
  - ■ Reviewing your plan on a regular basis will help you **measure the success** of your technology plan and help you **make course corrections**.

# Make Corrections and Incorporate Feedback

- **Make course corrections**
  - As the months and years go by, technology will improve, prices will go down, and opportunities will arise. By reviewing your plan frequently, and making it flexible, you will be able to take advantage of the opportunities as they arise.

- **Incorporate Feedback**
  - If the technology you're providing is for your staff, the staff should evaluate the technology or service.
  - If the technology you're providing is for your patrons, you need to incorporate a way for them to evaluate the technology.
    - For example: surveys, questionnaires on-line or in print, verbally

# What to Avoid

◆ Leaving out a full response to this area.

■ You must have an evaluation process in place and acknowledge that you are prepared to make mid-course corrections as appropriate.

# It's OK…

◆  If you don't cover every contingency.

◆  You know your library, use this opportunity to think about

1.  Measuring your goals to see if you've been successful in meeting them

2.  The most common challenges that could arise and the methods already in place of problem-solving at your library.

3.  How will you gather feedback and incorporate it?

# Also, let us know…

◆ Inform the Library of Michigan in writing of any substantive changes over the course of the 3-year technology plan. Keep a copy of this letter with your E-rate documentation.

# What To Do Once Your Technology Plan is Done

- ◆ Send your technology plan to be approved by the Library of Michigan because we are the USAC-certified technology plan approver for E-rate.

- ◆ We use the 5 guidelines talked about here as a checklist to approve your plan or return it for further work.

- ◆ Once approved, we keep your plan on file and send you an approval letter which you should keep on file.

Your Technology Plan is a Vision Statement: A vision of how you want technology to support your library's goals. Take advantage of the opportunities technology planning provides